
COMING SOON

HMS Identification Guide - Early 2004
HMS Advisory Panel Meeting - Feb. 9-11, 2004
International Pelagic Shark Assessment - 2004
Amendment 2 to the HMS FMP - draft in 2004

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact: Karyl Brewster-Geisz, Heather Stirratt, or
Chris Rilling at (301) 713-2347.

If your marina or fishing club would like to receive
regular shark postings from our HMS FAX
network, please contact the HMS Management
Division at (301) 713-2347. Alternatively,
information about *all* Federal fisheries, including
the shark fishery, can be obtained electronically via
FISHNEWS. Please see www.nmfs.noaa.gov to
sign up for this service.

Important Phone Numbers

Enforcement Hotline	800-853-1964
Southeast HMS Office	727-570-5447
Northeast HMS Office	978-281-9260
HMS Headquarters Office	301-713-2347
HMS Infoline	800-894-5528
Southeast Permit Office	727-570-5326

HMS CHARTER/HEADBOAT PERMITS

If you own or operate a charter/headboat vessel that
fishes for Atlantic HMS, including sharks, you
must have an Atlantic HMS Charter/ Headboat
permit. The permit can be purchased online at
www.nmfspermits.com or by calling
888-872-8862. If you have both a charter/headboat
and a commercial shark permit, you may sell sharks
when the season is open. When the commercial
shark season is closed, you may land sharks under
the recreational limits if engaged in a for-hire trip.

RECREATIONAL PERMITS

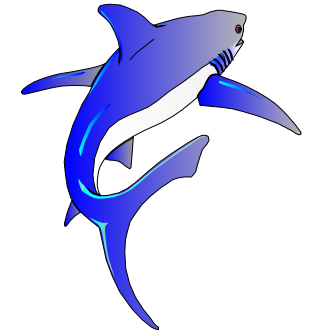
If you do not intend to sell sharks, you can take
sharks recreationally if you have an HMS angling
permit. There is a bag limit and size limit on
recreationally-caught sharks. The permit can be
purchased online at www.nmfspermits.com or by
calling 888-872-8862.

UPCOMING REGULATIONS

Vessel Monitoring System: NOAA Fisheries
recently approved a regulation that will require: (1)
directed shark bottom longline vessels located
between 33° N and 36° 30' N to install and operate a
VMS unit from January through July and (2) shark
gillnet vessels to install and operate a VMS unit
during the Right Whale Calving Season. NOAA
Fisheries is currently working to type-approve the
unit and providers. The effective date will be
announced in the future and will likely be on or
before November 15, 2004.

Dehooking device: NOAA Fisheries recently
approved a regulation that will require shark
bottom longline fishermen to have and use a
dehooking device. The dehooking device should
not be used on smalltooth sawfish. NOAA
Fisheries is currently working to type-approve a
dehooking device. The effective date will be
announced in the future and will likely be in 2004.

Atlantic Shark Commercial Fishery Regulations



January 2004

National Marine Fisheries Service
Office of Sustainable Fisheries
Highly Migratory Species (HMS)
Management Division



This pamphlet was prepared in January 2004 to provide
interested fishermen a summary of the commercial fishing
regulations for Atlantic sharks for the 2004 fishing year.
Complete regulations may be found at
www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/. The official regulations can be
found in 50 CFR part 635 and the *Federal Register*. Since
fishery rules are subject to change, fishermen must familiarize
themselves with the latest regulations and are responsible for
complying with current official regulations. This brochure is
produced in compliance with Section 212 of the Small Business
Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act.

Highly Migratory Species Management Division SF1
National Marine Fisheries Service
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910

COMMERCIAL SHARK FISHING PERMITS

Owners of vessels used to fish commercially for Atlantic sharks or who intend to sell sharks are required to obtain a shark limited access commercial permit from NOAA Fisheries. Without this permit, fishermen who fish in Federal waters cannot sell sharks. Under the limited access program, NOAA Fisheries is no longer issuing new commercial shark permits. To obtain a permit, you must transfer a permit, within the upgrading restrictions, from someone who is leaving the fishery. For information on renewals and transfers, please contact the Southeast Regional Permit Office at (727) 570-5326. Fishermen with this permit must abide by Federal regulations even within state waters unless that state has more restrictive regulations.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Fishermen with a commercial shark permit are required to report fishing activities in an approved logbook. Logbooks must be filled out within 48 hours of fishing and before offloading. Logbooks must be submitted to NOAA Fisheries within 7 days of offloading. Weighout slips for fish sold must accompany the logbook submission. Additionally, selected permit holders may be required to report cost and earnings information. This information must be submitted within 30 days of offloading. Please call the HMS Management Division at (301) 713-2347 for details.

OBSERVER PROGRAM

Fishermen with a commercial shark permit may be selected to carry an observer. If selected, you are required to carry an observer on every trip unless notified otherwise. Information on how to comply with the observer requirement will be specified in the selection package. Compliance includes all U.S. Coast Guard and NOAA Fisheries safety regulations such as having a valid safety decal for your vessel, having a useable life raft that will fit everyone on board, and providing the observer with the same accommodations as any crew member. Please call HMS Management Division at (301) 713-2347 for details.

SPECIES THAT MAY BE KEPT

Large Coastal Sharks: Sandbar, Tiger, Silky, Blacktip, Spinner, Nurse, Lemon, Bull, Great hammerhead, Smooth hammerhead, Scalloped hammerhead

Small Coastal Sharks: Atlantic sharpnose, Finetooth, Blacknose, Bonnethead

Pelagic Sharks: Shortfin mako, Common thresher, Porbeagle, Oceanic whitetip, Blue

SPECIES THAT **MUST** BE RELEASED

Prohibited species: White, Dusky, Sand tiger, Bigeye sand tiger, Whale, Basking, Bignose, Galapagos, Night, Caribbean reef, Narrowtooth, Caribbean sharpnose, Smalltail, Atlantic angel, Longfin mako, Bigeye thresher, Sevengill, Sixgill, Bigeye sixgill

If you catch a prohibited species, you must release that fish to the sea immediately with a minimum of injury and without removing the fish from the water. If you are not sure of the species and whether you may keep it, release it.

RETENTION LIMITS

Directed Shark Permits: During open seasons, directed shark permit holders may keep up to 4,000 lbs. dressed weight of large coastal sharks per vessel per trip. There are no retention limits for pelagic or small coastal sharks.

Incidental Shark Permits: During open seasons, incidental shark permit holders may keep up to 5 large coastal sharks per vessel per trip and 16 pelagic or small coastal sharks (all species combined) per vessel per trip.

LANDING RESTRICTIONS

Harvested sharks can be eviscerated and have the heads and fins removed but they cannot be filleted at sea.

SHARK FINS

Shark fins cannot exceed 5% of the dressed weight of the carcasses. No fins may remain on board the vessel after the first point of landing.

FISHING SEASONS

There are 2 fishing seasons: Jan. 1 through June 30 and July 1 through Dec. 31. Starting in 2005, there will be 3 fishing seasons: Jan. 1 through April 30, May 1 through Aug. 31, and Sept. 1 through Dec. 31.

FISHING REGIONS

The large and small coastal shark commercial quotas are split between 3 regions:

Gulf of Mexico: TX through west coast of FL;

South Atlantic: east coast of FL through NC including the Caribbean; and

North Atlantic: VA through ME.

When a region is closed for a particular species group, fishermen in that region cannot fish for species in that group and dealers in that region cannot buy species in that group from Federal fishermen.

2004 ANNUAL QUOTAS

Large Coastal: 1,017 mt dw or 2,242,078 lbs dw; 42% to Gulf of Mexico, 54% to S. Atl., 4% to N. Atl.

Small Coastal: 454 mt dw or 1,000,888.4 lbs dw; 4% to Gulf of Mexico, 83% to S. Atl., 13% to N. Atl.

Blue: 273 mt dw or 601,855.8 lbs dw

Porbeagle: 92 mt dw or 202,823.2 lbs dw

Other pelagic: 488 mt dw or 1,075,844.8 lbs dw

The quotas are currently split equally between each fishing season and may be adjusted to account for over- and underharvests from the 2003 seasons.

CLOSURE DATES

Large coastal shark fishery closure dates are announced before the start of each fishing season. The fishing season is not re-opened once closed. Small coastal shark and pelagic shark fisheries are monitored during the season. If needed, fishermen will be given 14 days notice of a fishery closure. Call the HMS Management Division at (301) 713-2347 for information regarding current openings and closings.

SELLING SHARKS

Sharks and shark fins can only be sold to permitted dealers. Dealers can obtain a shark dealer permit by contacting the Southeast Regional Permit Office at (727) 570-5326.

AUTHORIZED GEARS

Pelagic or bottom longline, gillnet, rod and reel, handline, or bandit gear. Time/area closures and other gear-specific regulations may apply. Please call HMS Management Division at (301) 713-2347 for details.

BOTTOM LONGLINE GEAR RESTRICTIONS

- Bottom longline vessels must post sea turtle handling and release guidelines in their wheelhouse. Guidelines can be obtained on the HMS webpage or by calling (301) 713-2347.
- As of February 1, 2004, bottom longline vessels will need to: have corrodible non-stainless steel hooks; have and use line cutters and dipnets; and move 1 nmi after an interaction with a protected species.
- As of January 1, 2005, an area between Oregon Inlet and Cape Fear, North Carolina will be closed to directed shark vessels with bottom longline gear on board from January through July of each year.

GILLNET GEAR RESTRICTIONS

- Directed shark gillnet vessels have 100% observer coverage during Right Whale Calving Season and ~50% observer coverage the rest of the year. Selected vessels will be notified. If you are not sure if you need an observer, call John Carlson at (850) 234-6541 x221.
- If a whale is *sighted* while fishing with a gillnet, the vessel operator must call the Southeast Fisheries Science Center at (305) 862-2850 and cease fishing immediately.
- Gillnet vessels must conduct net checks every 2 hours to look for and remove any protected species. This is the only time while fishing that the gillnet is allowed to be detached from the vessel.